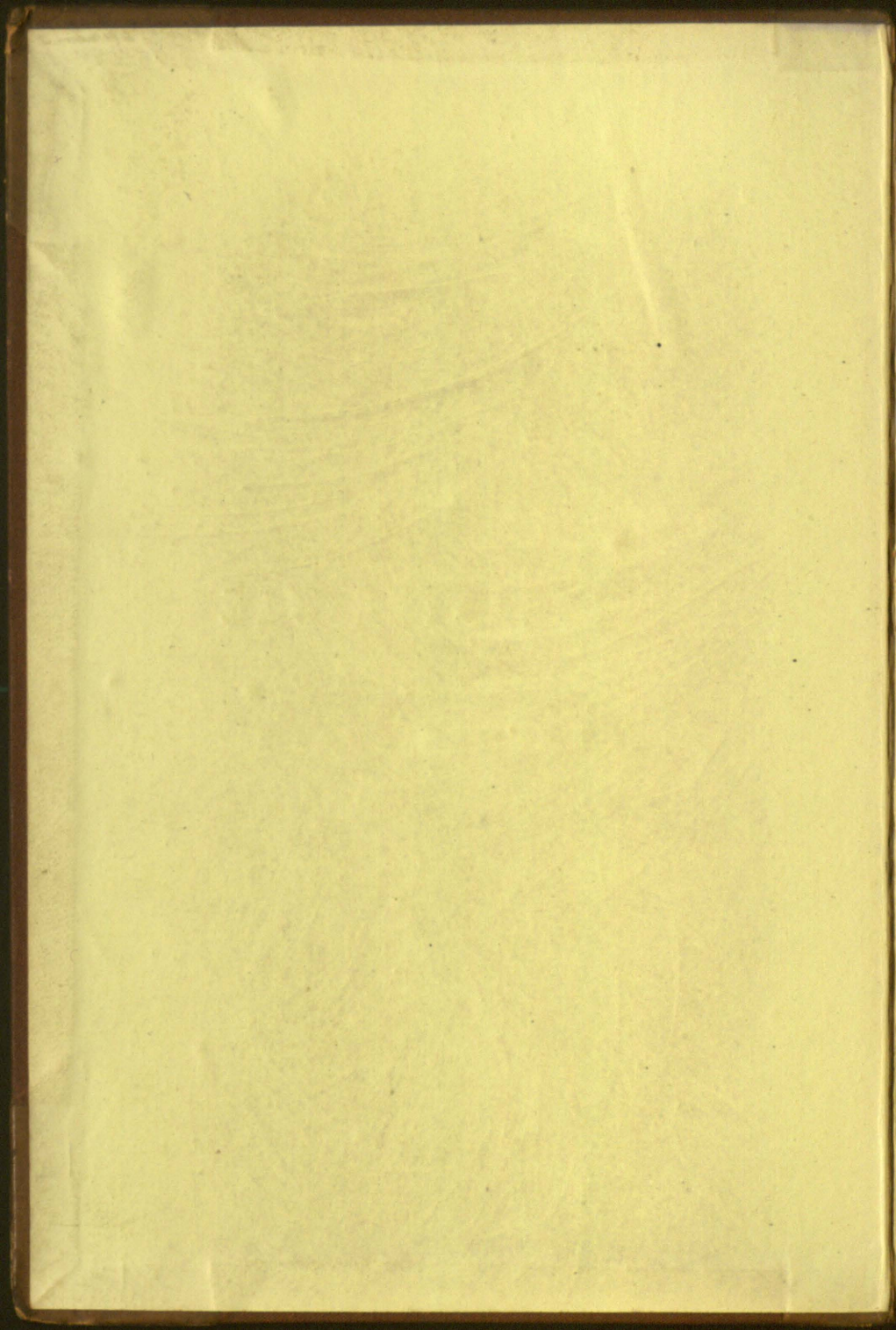
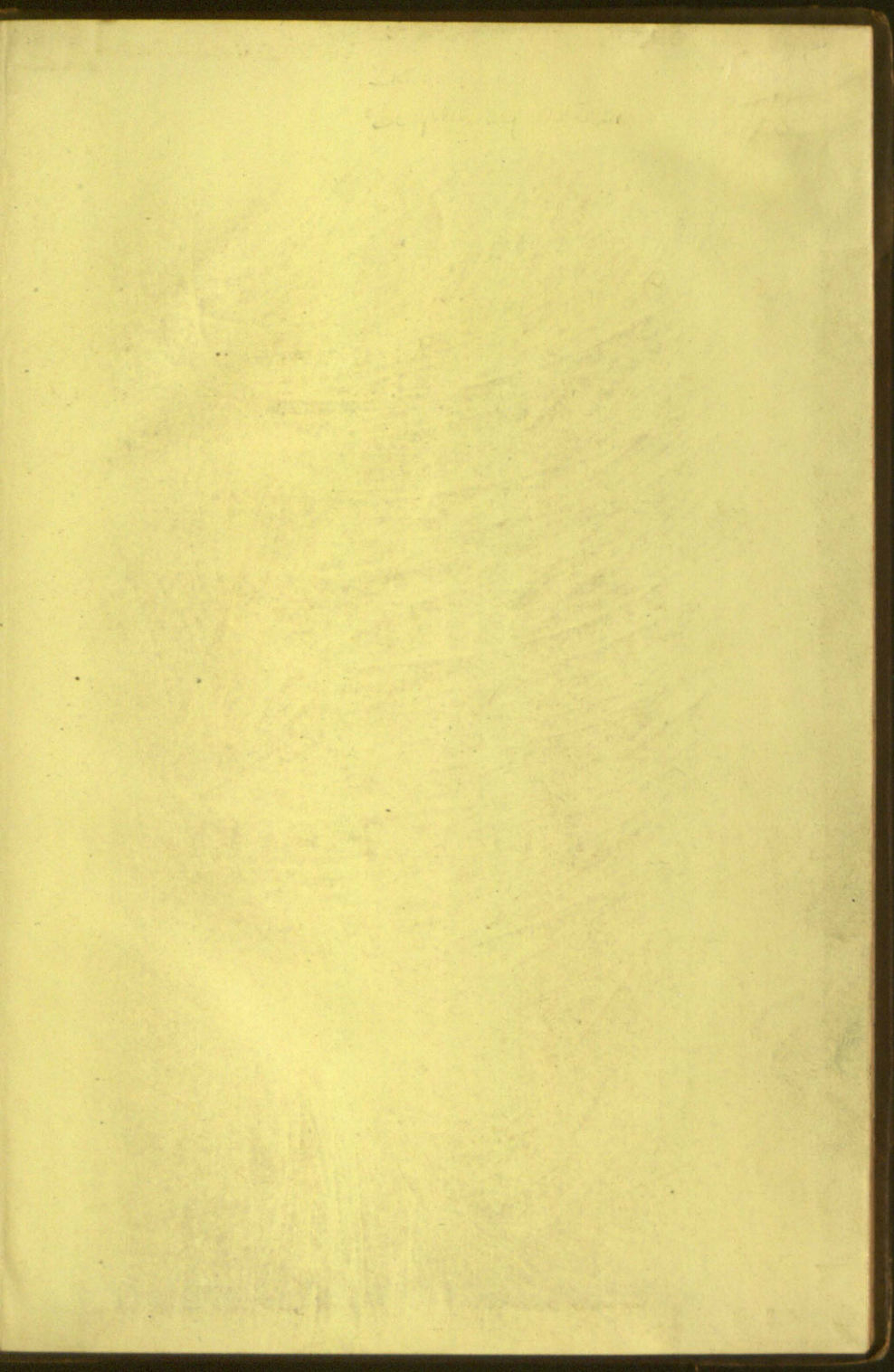
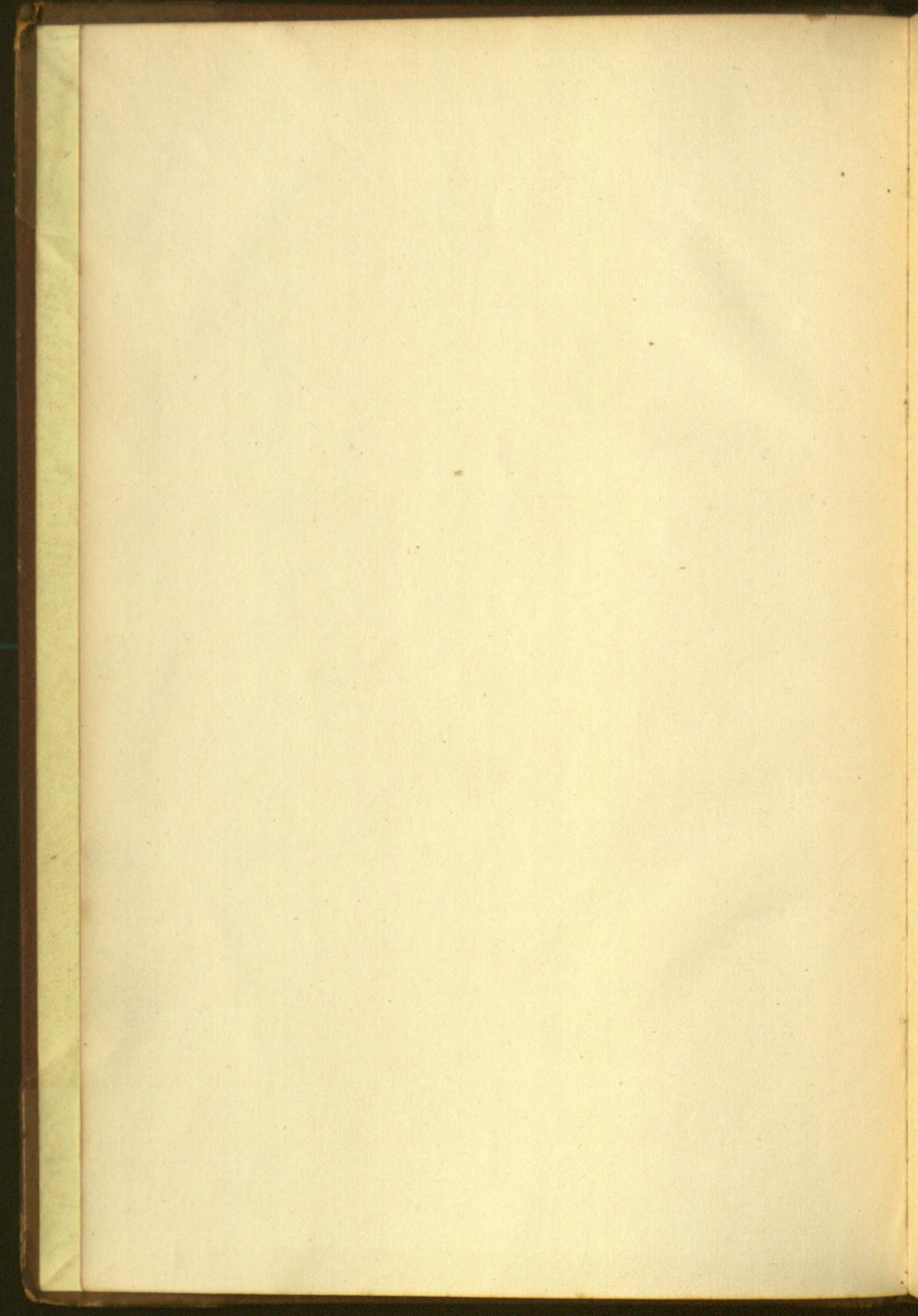


THE
ASHANTEE WAR
BY
THOMAS SNAPE.







With the Author's affectionate regards.

THE
ASHANTEE WAR:

ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

A Lecture,

Delivered in Hope Hall, Liverpool, April 21st, 1874, at the request of the Liverpool Peace Society—Isaac B. Cooke, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair;

And in the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, May 4th, 1874, for the Lancashire and Cheshire International Arbitration Association—Dr. John Watts presiding.

BY

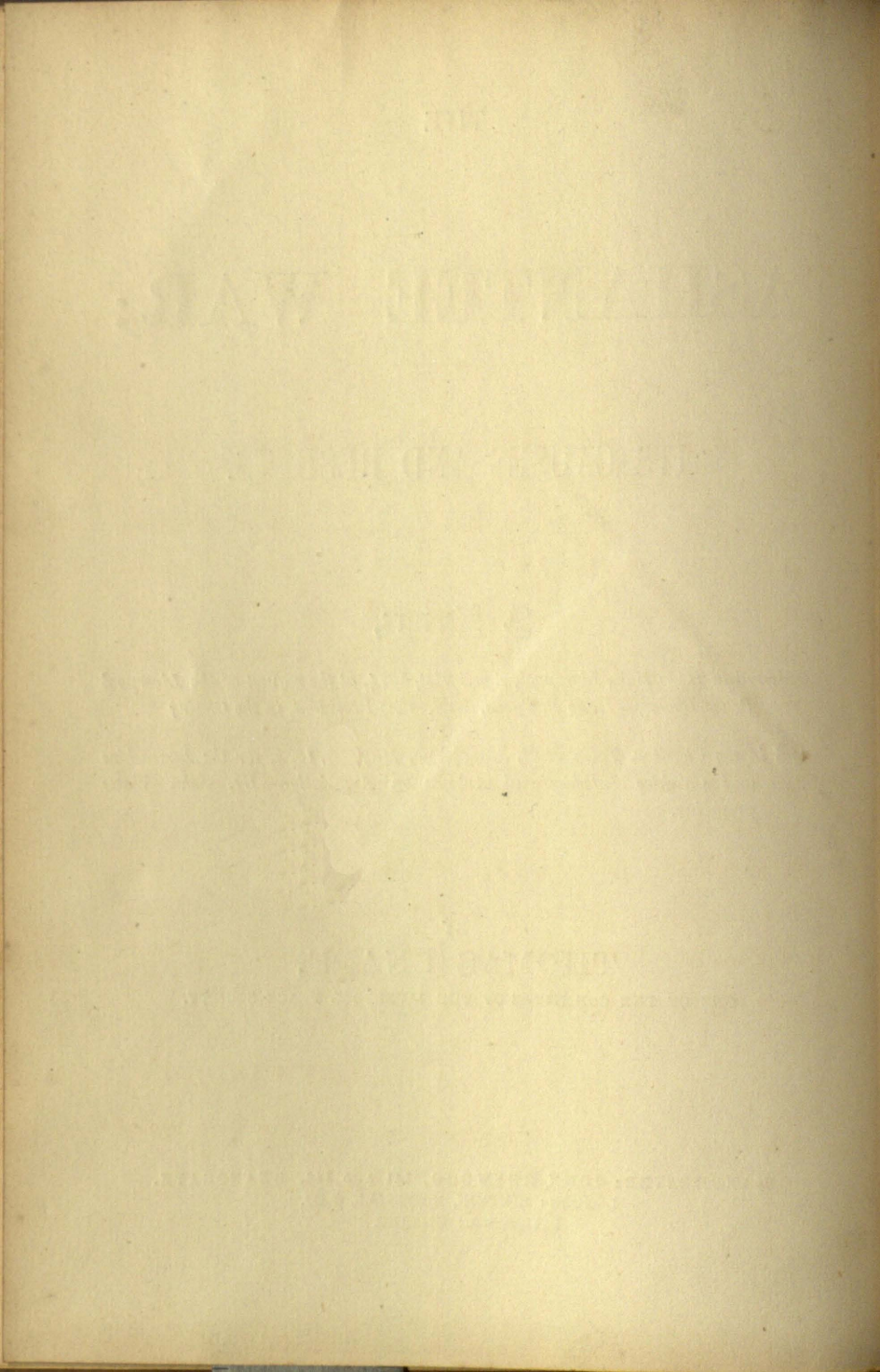
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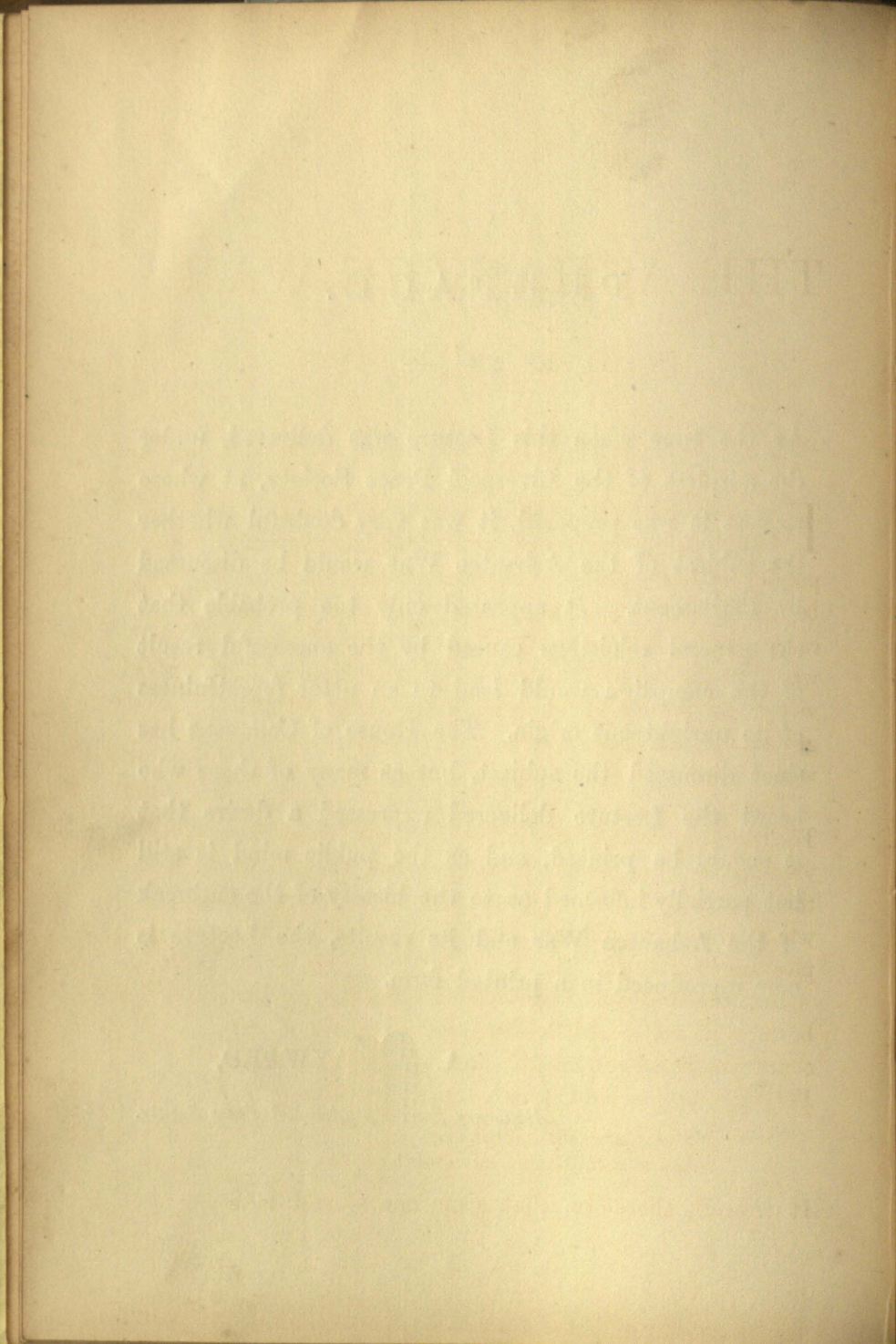


P R E F A C E .

AT the time when this Lecture was delivered, under the auspices of the Liverpool Peace Society, at whose request it was prepared, it was very doubtful whether the subject of the Ashantee War would be discussed by Parliament. It appeared only too probable that the general rejoicings caused by the successful result of the campaign would lead to an utter forgetfulness of its unrighteous origin. The House of Commons has since discussed the subject, but as many of those who heard the Lecture delivered expressed a desire that it should be printed, and as the public mind is still but partially informed as to the history of the outbreak of the Ashantee War and its results, the Lecture is now reproduced in a printed form.

A. B. HAYWARD,

Honorary Secretary Liverpool Peace Society.



THE ASHANTEE WAR:

ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

IT is proverbially easy to be wise after the event. Introductory
But nothing was more difficult to the general public, with reference to the recent war, than to be wise before. And even now it is all over, the causes are so remote that the great bulk of those who have shouted "hurrah!" at the tidings of victory have done so for want of knowledge of the grounds which gave rise to the dispute, or they would possibly be indulging in jeremiads instead.

There is no cause for wonder at this ignorance. To disentomb the reasons for that war from the voluminous blue-books which enshroud them, and the protracted negotiations and blundering by which they are hidden, is a task of no light or pleasant character.

But the war has been waged, the victory has been won, and, doubtless, there are many of our countrymen as thoughtful and inquiring as little Peterkin, and as ready with him to exclaim—

"Now, tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for?"

It is well, therefore, that some one should take

the part of Kaspar, and furnish an answer to that inquiry.

Historical
retrospect.

The facts involved in the quarrel require some allusion to the history of British establishments in West Africa. Upon that coast there are now four British stations, known respectively as Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Lagos. The station which has been the head-quarters of the recent dispute was that at the Gold Coast. The district known by that name is the coast-line of the broad upper portion of Africa, where, almost in a direct line from west to east, it trends inward to the narrow and lower division of that continent. All these stations are very unhealthy. Much land in their vicinity is swampy, or badly drained. The sanitary arrangements of the towns are very defective; and, under the heat of an equatorial sun, miasmatic vapours are exhaled, and the climate is most deadly to the life of Europeans. The death-rate of whites on the coast is 25 per 100 per annum*—twelve times that of London; so that the white population, were it not for exceptional cases and continual renewals, would be extinct once every four years.

Though the affairs of these settlements are administered by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, yet, so far as the Gold Coast is concerned,

* Another statement gives the death-rate as 21 per cent, but as neither percentage includes the deaths of those who return to England, stricken by disease, it is probable both figures are under the mark. It will be obvious that this state of things necessitates a continual change of Governors, who have to leave the coast before they can even acquire, much less utilise, a practical acquaintance with their duties. This constant change accounts for the number of Governors whose names are associated with the proceedings of the recent war.

they are not at all analogous to our colonial possessions elsewhere. The origin of our establishments on the West African Coast dates as far back as the time of Queen Elizabeth. The purpose for which we first gained a footing there was the protection of trade—in other words, to throw the shield of British protection over our countrymen engaged in the infamous traffic in slaves. This was the only trade of moment then carried on, and perhaps is the only description of commerce which cannot be carried on without the aid of war.

To protect these traders in their horrible transactions, France, the United Provinces, and Denmark, as well as ourselves, had, with or without the consent of the tribes in the districts, established factories, which were necessarily fortified, and eventually came to be regarded as possessions. These forts are the only possessions on the Gold Coast to which we have any shadow of title, the adjoining towns and territory belonging to the resident tribes. In this respect, therefore, as we possess no land on the coast, our footing there is very different from the position we occupy in our colonial possessions.

With the abolition of slavery in British territory, and the vigorous efforts directed towards its suppression, the export trade in slaves became extinct, and so insignificant was the remaining commerce, that, after this lapse of time, the whole trade of the four British settlements in West Africa does not much exceed one million sterling.

But confining ourselves to the Gold Coast, the Danish and French Governments regarded the trade

there of such small importance that the former, in 1850, sold the Danish forts to Great Britain for the sum of £10,000, getting at once a good price for a losing concern and a good riddance of a heavy burden; and the latter, in 1870, abandoned the forts under the protection of France.

Dutch and
English ad-
ministration.

The only remaining European powers were those of the Netherlands and Great Britain; and their forts, which were in close proximity,—in some instances flanking each other,—were scattered along 300 miles of coast. This state of things had arisen from the jealousy of the traders of these two countries, who wished to have a fort near to back them by the military power of their respective governments in cases of dispute. The natives in the towns and districts in the vicinity of these forts came to regard themselves as allies, and as, in some sort, under the protection of the Dutch or English, as their interests and sympathies might lie. It must be observed, however, that not a single treaty exists, or has existed, in which any such protection has been promised by the English Government.

The Dutch and the English differed materially in their way of administering their mode of government. The Dutch are said to have been less keenly alive to the barbarous customs of the natives, whilst those customs were discountenanced by the British authorities; and though neither Government interfered with slavery in the interior, our Government refused to surrender fugitive slaves who had taken refuge under the protection of the forts. But the most inconvenient point of

difference was that of Excise. The Dutch did not levy any customs duties. The English, on the contrary, tried, with very poor success, to make the British administration partially self-supporting by imposing taxes: at one time a poll-tax, at another levying a duty on imports of 2 per cent, which has been since largely increased. With the Dutch and English forts so intermingled, it will readily be perceived that the English revenue could not be very easily collected, and that the Dutch arrangements must have been much more acceptable to the natives near their forts than would ours. To remedy this state of things, an exchange of stations had been effected in 1847, we giving the Dutch some of our more westerly forts, and they in return ceding to us some of theirs to the eastward. But in 1867-8 the forts were still "pretty considerably mixed:" now an English fort, then a Dutch, then an English, then three Dutch, and so on; whilst at Accra, the town was half English, half Dutch, having two forts, two custom-houses, and therefore two methods of government.

This, and other reasons—doubtless the profitless nature of the settlement being one—led the Dutch to agree, in 1867, to cede to the English Government all their forts eastward of the river Sweet; and this arrangement still failing to produce order, eventually, in 1871, the Dutch handed over to us all their forts, and entirely withdrew from the Gold Coast. In exchange, our Government agreed to give up the right reserved by treaty of preventing the Dutch acquiring further territory in Sumatra. To the Dutch, with their rich colonies in the East,

Exchange
Dutch and
English forts.

this power of gaining a stronger position there appeared of considerable importance. To the English, if we are to believe Mr. Bowles and Mr. Disraeli, it is of no less moment, as by giving up this treaty we have surrendered our control over the Straits of Malacca, and, in consequence, unheard-of dangers threaten our shipping in the future. Mr. Gladstone rejoins by a denial that the surrender of the treaty is any disadvantage, and the statesmen may be left to settle the quarrel between themselves.

It may be noted that the exchange, as might be expected from bargaining away other people's rights, was disadvantageous to both parties. The Dutch, in attempting to extend their influence in Sumatra, speedily found themselves involved in a war with our old ally, the Sultan of Acheen, and we were soon entangled in conflict with their old ally, the Ashantee king.

Thus far I have endeavoured to give an impartial *resumé* of the causes, territorial and administrative, which led to the exchange.

But after attaching due weight to the reasons I have assigned, the question still has to be answered, whether there was not far more to be said against assuming possession of the Dutch forts, and against continuing the occupation of our own, than in favour of remaining and extending our influence. By doing so, we could but entail upon ourselves increased responsibilities, which had in their diminished form, in bygone years, been harassing enough to make us withdraw from the government of the settlement more than once.

Our remaining could be of no service to trade. Position of
the Fantees
and Ashantees
At best we could but hope to levy a uniform customs impost, and possibly to succeed in making the taxes revenue cover the expense of government administration, which had never yet been done. But, on the other hand, our continuance, and especially associated with possession of the Dutch forts, was the most likely method that could be adopted of fostering jealousies between two hostile peoples, the Fantees and the Ashantees, and enkindling amongst the latter a bitter and a warlike spirit. To understand this thoroughly it is necessary to take a summary review of the relations of these two tribes to each other and to ourselves.

Along the territory bordering the coast covered by the British forts, and extending some fifty to eighty miles inland, is the country of the Fantees, and other tribes, under what is termed the British Protectorate. Beyond that boundary, to the north, the Ashantees are located. The Ashantees are a resolute, warlike people. Like most savage races, they are cruel and have little respect for human life; but they are intelligent, and are capable, if civilised, of rendering great service to Africa and to humanity. The Fantees are not less cruel, if they had the opportunity, but they are as craven and degraded as men who have been conquered and enslaved by superior forces and their own vices can possibly be.

For 200 years back there have existed strife and hatred between the Fantee and the Ashantee tribes. From the beginning, and through the greater part of the last century, the Ashantees had

been fighting their way nearer and nearer to the coast. They subdued and made tributary many of the intervening tribes, until in 1807 they were masters of the whole country. They had repeatedly fought and defeated the Fantees, and had even possessed themselves of one of the European settlements. Up to the year 1821, the government of the British settlements had been carried on by companies; but in 1822, the hostility of the Ashantees still continuing, the control of the British forts was assumed by the Imperial Government, and Sir Charles MacCarthy was appointed Commander-in-Chief. On his arrival, he thought there was no way of establishing peace but by the sword. Accordingly he declared war, with the result that in 1824 he and his whole force were destroyed by the Ashantees, who are said to have used his skull as a fetish, and royal drinking-cup.

Thus the Fantees living in our Protectorate, and ourselves, were both at war with the Ashantee race. Eventually, after Cape Coast Castle had run great risk of being captured, the Ashantees were defeated, and our Home Government having had enough of it, withdrew, and left the control, in 1827, in the hands of a company of London merchants. In 1831 they appointed an able man as governor, Mr. Maclean, the husband of the poetess, Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L. E. L.). For twelve years he managed to govern so as to keep the Ashantees in check and to maintain security and peace. In 1843 the Imperial Government once more assumed control, and afterwards the negotiations with the Dutch, which have been described, took place, the

result being the assumption by the British Government of the control of the whole coast.

On the face of it there was every probability that such an arrangement would not conduce to peace. Here were Fantee and Ashantee, or allies of Ashantee, who had been at enmity with each other for years, brought under the control of the English Government, and it was absurdly imagined that this would assist in fostering trade and contributing to peace. And here was the English Government supposing, in its simplicity, that the Ashantees would dwell peaceably with the Fantees, whom they had conquered and held in contempt. The Ashantee lion was to lie down with the Fantee wolf, and the English lamb would rule over them, and keep both in order and peace.

Reasons for
non-extension
of British re-
sponsibility.

But irrespective of suppositions, full and explicit information was on the parliamentary records, which ought to have precluded the possibility of our Government taking such a step. A Select Committee of the House of Commons sat in 1865 to inquire into our Colonial relations. Colonel Ord, a Government commissioner, who made a most able and elaborate report to that committee on the state of the Gold Coast, gave evidence. He was examined upon the very question of taking over the Dutch forts, and says in reply, that though he disbelieved in an Ashantee invasion of the protected territory, yet it might be expected that "when the King of Ashantee may have a cause of quarrel with us, we shall be liable, as we were before, to an incursion of some of his savages across the border, who will plunder some of the protected

tribes in the neighbourhood, and carry some of the people into captivity. That state of things we must accept." But he would give the natives distinctly to understand our support would be moral only, and would be limited to advice and supplies of arms and ammunition, and that "they must fight for themselves."

Naturally, the Select Committee did not like such a prospect. It did not require much sapience to foresee that if the natives refused to fight for themselves, the Ashantees might not be long in marching upon the forts, and we should then have to fight or withdraw. The committee therefore embodied in their report the following recommendations: "That while it is not possible to withdraw altogether from the coast, the Government should offer no further protection, take no new territory, but aim at the natives assuming self-government, and the ultimate withdrawal from all, except, perhaps, Sierra Leone. That this policy of non-extension admits of no exception as regards new settlements, but cannot amount to an absolute prohibition of measures which, in peculiar cases, may be necessary for the more effectual and economical administration of the settlements we already possess."

Why there could not have been an immediate withdrawal does not appear; but, in the face of such an authoritative declaration as to the taking "no new territory," and "the policy of non-extension" admitting "of no exception as regards new settlements," it was a most glaring blunder on the

part of the Government to take up new settlements by receiving these forts from the Dutch.

There are but two pretexts that can be assigned as the shadow of a reason for such a course. One is upon the ground of economy, and the other is in the interests of trade.

Was economy likely to be promoted by taking up new territory, with increased expenses and enlarged obligations? The revenue of the country in 1863, as given in the return of the Select Committee, was £8,547, out of which £4,583, or more than one-half, was received from a grant from our own Parliament. But the expenditure amounted to £9,409; so that though there was such a large grant, the disbursements exceeded the receipts by £860. And though by a considerable increase in trade, chiefly in spirituous liquors, and by increasing the taxation on some articles 150 per cent, the deficiency has now been lessened, the forts still cost this country, in 1870, more than £2,000. The Dutch settlements cost their Government, as they imposed no duties, the sum of £12,500 yearly, and that sum, or any considerable portion of it, could only be raised by taxation, or met by a Parliamentary grant. The transfer was, therefore, unlikely to be successful on economical grounds, even after due allowance is made for the advantages of a uniform customs import along the whole coast.

Fallacy of reasons assigned in favour of accepting the Dutch forts.

How far our Government was justified, with the view of protecting trade, in accepting these Dutch forts, will appear from the views of various statesmen.

The Earl of Derby, in Liverpool, in October last, said : " I believe, as a matter of fact, trade is found to grow quite as fast, if not rather faster, in places where we do not exercise political power than in those where we do ; and, whilst not denying the value of colonies, I think, to put the thing plainly, that we have got quite black men enough, and that we had better not go in for more."

John Bright said : " Trade flourishes rather more where there are no forts than where there are forts. . . . And the honour and interests of the country, at some not distant time, would be best consulted by an entire withdrawal from that coast."

Richard Cobden, speaking in 1850, on Lord Grey's proposal to purchase the Danish forts, said : " The national obligation to the interests of trade is to remove obstacles, but not to purchase land for its promotion. . . . We are told that if we occupy territory enough we may secure a revenue for its maintenance, but the result is generally more of outgoings than of income."

In confirmation of this consensus of opinion, it may be noted that nearly one-third the amount of imports in 1872 was for guns, powder, wines, and spirits—in other words, for the means of promoting wars and general demoralisation. What wonder that, with such a list of imports, our missionaries are not more successful in making converts? The most valuable portion of the West Coast exports, that of the Oil rivers, in the Bight of Benin, does not pass through British or protected

stations at all. Trade in that district flourishes, therefore, where there are none of these forts or military settlements, and affords proof that it might very well do so elsewhere. And in further confirmation of this view, I quote the following from Sir Charles Adderley's "Review of our Colonial Policy" (page 196):—

"The evidence collected by the West African Committee of 1865, of which I was chairman, tends to show that our commerce on that coast has thriven better where we have established no settlements, as, for instance, at the Niger; and seems to indicate, as the cause of this fact, the greater care which is taken by the merchants to keep on good terms with the natives when they have no English force to back their quarrels, and the less inducement to internal quarrels amongst the natives when there is no great power near on whose alliance to speculate."

Neither economy, therefore, nor trade would be promoted, but loss in revenue and injury to commerce might with certainty be expected to result, and, on these grounds, as well as on account of the great risk of awakening hostilities, it is to be deplored that the Government, in defiance of the recommendation of a Select Committee of Parliament, accepted the Dutch forts.

The British authorities, disregarding this recommendation, not satisfied with the troubles and loss they had sustained in ruling over half the coast, thought they could succeed by attempting to rule over the whole, in reducing those troubles and lessening this loss in some way which they have yet to explain, if they can.

Negotiations
for transfer,
and necessity
for caution.

The arrangement to transfer the forts was in consequence negotiated, and business men would have thought that, in purchasing land, the British Government would have obtained the opinion of one of its many well-paid legal advisers as to whether or no the vendor had a good title to the possessions which he offered for sale.

Ordinary prudence, too, required—as this territory was inhabited by many thousands, members of different and hostile tribes, deeply interested, if not absolutely involved, in the transfer—that the most scrupulous care would be taken to ascertain if there was a thorough willingness on the part of these tribes to accept our protectorate and administration instead of that of the Dutch. There was the greater need for this because of occurrences at the former exchange of forts, which, it has been mentioned, was effected in 1867, when our Government agreed that we should take all the forts eastward of the Sweet river, and the Dutch all the forts to the west. Considerable disturbances had then arisen at some of the forts, notably at Commendah and Dixcove, because the inhabitants were allied to the Fantees and the English, and objected to be transferred to the Dutch, who were friendly to the Ashantees. It might, therefore, have been fairly anticipated that if the less powerful tribes objected to be transferred to the Dutch, those more powerful who were allies of the Ashantees would object to be comprised in the English protectorate. Such a position placed them under the control of the English, who were the Fantee allies, and was

virtually, therefore, a triumph for the Fantees over foes by whom they had been defeated again and again.

It might also have been expected that the Ashantees, though not inhabitants of the districts concerned, would strongly object to their friends and allies, who were dwelling there, being transferred in this summary fashion from the rule of their friends, the Dutch, to that of their foes, the English. And, irrespective of such objections as the hostile feelings of the Ashantees might lead them to entertain, they had also material reasons of a most weighty character which would make the transfer appear a grievous injury. Like most negroes, they are fond of trade, and though a war-like people, they are quite alive to the advantages of commerce and peace. Koffee Kalcalli, their present king, has said that "war is a doubtful career"—a sentiment worthy of a peace platform—"but trade, which is the best support of nations and the principal care of the wisest, should be well and universally established." But the boundary line of the kingdom was some eighty or ninety miles from the coast, and it was necessary, for the furtherance of their trade, that they should be able to count upon an independent and open route to the sea-board. This they had possessed from time immemorial, through territory which they had formerly subjugated. This territory, their highway to the sea, was now inhabited by allies upon whom they could depend, and was in the protectorate of the Dutch, with whom they had been on the most friendly terms. The coast-

Ashantee objections to the transfer.

route difficulty was strengthened by the fact, of which the Ashantees could not but be aware, that their goods under Dutch administration were admitted duty free, whilst under British they would be heavily taxed. It is clear, therefore, that when the Dutch offered to transfer the forts in this territory, our Government, prior to concurring in the agreement, ought to have been thoroughly satisfied that the forts were theirs to transfer, and that the natives who would be affected did not object.

How far this was done I will endeavour to show.

Validity of
the Dutch title
disputed by
the Ashantees,
who claim
Elmina.

Eastward of the river Sweet is Cape Coast Castle, the English fort. Westward, a few miles distant, on the other side of the river, was the Dutch fort of Elmina, and the town of the same name. To this town the King of Ashantee had always laid claim, and the Dutch appear to have recognised his claim by paying him an annual stipend of £80, which he said was tribute, but which they represented as a present intended as subsistence, and to promote friendly relations of trade. Through this town of Elmina the Ashantees could always count upon carrying on their trade with the coast, for the Elmina king acknowledged his allegiance to them, and was their warm friend and ally.

In 1870, as soon as the Ashantees heard of the proposed transfer, and whilst negotiations for that purpose were then in progress at the Hague, King Koffee wrote to our Governor on November 24th, 1870, and, after describing how he considered

Elmina to be his, and how from time immemorial it had paid annual tribute to his ancestors, he added: "I hope your Excellency will not include Elmina in the change, for it is mine by right." Again, on the 20th May, 1871, the King writes: "From the ancient up to this time, Elmina is mine;" and he cannot understand how the change to the protection of anyone else could take place. The King and Chiefs of Elmina also refused to agree to the transfer. They held a palaver on the 19th December, 1870, and declared that, "On no account will we become English."

If anything more were needed to deter our Government from proceeding further with these engagements, which have been so truthfully described as "equivocal and entangling," surely these facts ought, when they were brought to their knowledge, as they were on the 16th December, 1870, by Governor Ussher, our Administrator, who stated at the same time, as his own opinion, that "the Ashantee monarch had certain claims over Elmina," and that the explanations of Colonel Nagtglas, the Dutch Administrator, were "not satisfactory," and he was "very uneasy on this point." Moreover, he very properly wrote that he "could not, and would not, purchase forts which lay under suspicion of being feudatory to a powerful native prince, the traditional enemy of its protected tribes."

The English Government aware of the Ashantee claims.

No one, therefore, was more fully alive to the difficulties in the way of the negotiations than the English Government. The original title to our own forts, as may be inferred from the way in

which I have shown they were established, was by no means infeasible ; but, if the buildings to be transferred had been simply inoffensive depôts, the interposing difficulties would doubtless have been easily overcome. Instead of this, the place in dispute was a fort dominating a town—the town of Elmina—having its own king and its own chiefs. Not only did the fortress command the town, but it controlled the harbour, and thus such commerce with the sea could alone be transacted as the occupants of the fort chose to allow. To the Ashantees, the most powerful people of that part of Africa, the nearest boundary line of their own country was fifty miles or more from the coast. The districts between that boundary and other shipping ports was occupied by the Fantees and others in the English protectorate, hostile to the Ashantee race ; it was, therefore, of vital importance to keep in their own control the road through Elmina to the sea. The king and chiefs of that town were their allies, and their commerce by that route was untrammelled. Through the Fantee territories and the English ports, vexatious exactions would be made, and the trade would have to be transacted by the agency of middlemen, who would have charged a profit of fifty per cent. The transfer of Elmina to the English meant, therefore, ceding a fort, a town and its people, and a coast-route which the Ashantees considered theirs from ancient times, and, at the same time, a triumph to their foes, the Fantees, and to the allies of those foes, the English.

What wonder, therefore, at the objections the Ashantees raised? And objections so weighty ought to have made us pause: the more so, as there was then living in Elmina, supported by the Dutch Governor, one of the chief Ashantee warriors, an uncle of the king, named Atjiempon, who was inciting the tribes in the Dutch districts to oppose the transfer, and who the previous year had been engaged in war with the Fantees, and they in reprisal had attacked Elmina but a short time before the transfer was made.

Effect upon
the English
Government
of Ashantee
claims.

All the effect, however, that was produced upon our Government was to lead Earl Kimberley, the Secretary for the Colonies, to ask (February 11th, 1871) that the Dutch Government should procure "the renunciation of the claim of the King of Ashantee to Elmina, else this Government may find itself involved in a war with the Ashantees;" and he also asserted the absolute necessity, "before the completion of the transfer," of removing Atjiempon and his followers from the Elmina country. Earl Kimberley also wrote, on the 28th of the same month, to the Gold Coast, to our Governor Kennedy, a dispatch to the same purport, that these two points "should be settled by the Netherlands Government before the convention for the transfer is concluded." And yet, incredible as it may appear, seeing that these serious difficulties existed, the convention for the transfer had actually been signed at the Hague, on the 25th February, three days before.

Meanwhile the Dutch, sensible that they had made a good bargain in getting rid of the loss and

Dutch
compulsion of
Ashantees.

incumbrance of their Gold Coast forts, did all in their power to bring it to a successful completion, in order to realise its expected benefits. Accordingly, on the principle of "no compulsion, only you must," they tried the gentle effect of a persuasive policy, which consisted in consigning Atjiempon to gaol, and informing King Koffee, whose uncle they had thus imprisoned, that the yearly payment of £80 would be discontinued until he relinquished his claim on Elmina.

British efforts to aid the Dutch contrary to our declared policy.

The British Government, who had everything to lose, and nothing to gain by the transfer, aided the Dutch to bring it about with an innocence and simplicity that, amid the general craftiness of diplomacy, would be quite refreshing, were it not for the bloodshed that was almost certain to result. Not that the English resorted to any compulsory means of persuasion, but to induce the Elminas to consent to the transfer, our Administrator, Mr. Ussher, gave assurances quite inconsistent with our former policy; and in the very teeth of a dispatch written by Lord Kimberley, early in 1871, Mr. Ussher promised the Elminas, if they would comply peaceably with the transfer, they should have our protection, and tried to convince them how hopeless against the Fantees they would be without our aid. Up to this period no treaty existed by which we were bound to engage in war in defence of any of the native tribes even in what was called the British Protectorate. Lord Granville, when Colonial Secretary in 1869, disavowed a similar assurance given at that time by an agent of our Government, and had declared that the

employment of British troops for such a purpose "would be wholly contrary to the policy of this country;" "the wars they [the natives] engage in are their wars, and not the wars of this country;" and "the British Government is unable to make itself responsible for their defence in case they should prove unable to defend themselves." Lord Kimberley's letter in February, 1871, expressed regret that our English agent had stated, at a meeting of Elminas, "that violence on the part of the Fantees would be put down if necessary with a high hand and by force;" an engagement which he entirely disavowed; and yet, but a few months afterwards, Mr. Ussher, the British Administrator, gives an assurance to the Elminas little less compromising.

The Dutch having got the whip-hand of the Ashantees, by imprisoning the King's uncle as a hostage, sent a messenger, a Mr. Plange, to Coomassie to obtain from the King the surrender of his claims. This messenger returned, as might almost have been anticipated, apparently quite successful. Accompanied by two Ashantee envoys, he brought a letter from King Koffee, dated November 24th, 1871. The King now declared that his former letters of November, 1870, and May, 1871, in which he had urged that Elmina was his, and should not be included in the change, were a mistake of the writers and dictators, and that the sentiments were "a vague, formal, nominal expression;" the whole being "a mistake." He further solemnly declared—at least so says Plange—in his presence, that by his former remarks with reference

Professed
renunciation
of Ashantee
claims to
Elmina.

to the Dutch tribute or annual payment, he only "meant board wages and salary, and not tribute by right of arms from the Dutch Government."

Absence of precautions by the English to ascertain if the renunciation was genuine.

Upon receipt of this letter the Dutch released Atjiempon, and it was apparently taken for granted that the obstacles in the way of the transfer were removed. One would have thought that in so serious a matter the English would have thoroughly satisfied themselves of the King's sincerity, and that there was no "mistake" in "writing or dictating" this recantation of previous avowals, which were much more likely to be true. This could either have been done by an independent messenger, or by a trusted British envoy accompanying Mr. Plange. But neither course was followed. This message through the Dutch was received without question, though possibly not without misgiving, and arrangements were entered upon for completing the transfer.

That the document should have been verified, and that Mr. Plange's account should not have been otherwise received, may be readily inferred from the fact that Plange was an Elmina man, a native clerk employed by the Dutch. It has since appeared that Plange, who was subsequently again sent to the King, but this time by our own Government, acted most treacherously. He told King Koffee, and the King afterwards assigned it as one of the reasons for the war, that "in four months, he (the British Administrator) would come to take away power from him." And, according to Colonel Harley, one of our Governors, "there were people there who could have told Mr. Henessey, had it

suited him to learn it, that Mr. Plange's loyalty to the flag was more than suspected; that he had been known to say, 'Elmina is transferred, but not in heart.' "

The British Government was thus, through the want of the commonest precaution, made the dupe of what has been correctly styled, "this diplomatic farce." The King was in the hands of his writers; the Dutch held him by means of the hostage to some extent in their power; and whether he understood what was written, or whether he wrote it undercompulsion, that Atjijempon might be released, has not yet been ascertained, but it is known that bribery and coercion were brought into play. That the letter was most certainly contrary to the whole tenor of King Koffee's previous protestations and conduct, is indubitably clear—that is, it is clear to everyone but the British authorities. But they, with a blind infatuation to possess themselves of this useless and troublesome increase of responsibility, immediately after the letter was received, ratified the convention they had signed with such precipitate haste twelve months before, and on the 6th April, 1872, they took over the forts.

The transfer, however, was not effected without considerable misgivings, for I find a despatch from the Admiralty, under date of February, 1872, stating that, acting upon a letter from the Colonial Office, orders had been sent to the Commodore of the West African station "to be present with such number of vessels as he may be able to collect, on the Gold Coast, on the occasion of the transfer of the Dutch settlements

British apprehension of hostilities at the transfer.

to Great Britain." These misgivings may be further inferred from the instructions sent by Earl Kimberley to Governor Pope Hennessey, who was to receive the forts when handed over to us by the Dutch. They deserve the more attention as they afford additional evidence that our Government was entering upon these "equivocal and entangling engagements" with eyes wide open, and were perfectly aware of the dangers to be incurred. The special attention of Governor Hennessey was called to the Elminas, a tribe "numbering about 12,000 or 15,000." They are stated to "have been hitherto under the protection of the Dutch, and are also in alliance with the King of Ashantee, avowedly for protection against the Fantees, with whom they have lately had constant feuds, which the British authorities have had great difficulty in appeasing. . . . They (the Elminas) should be distinctly told that they will not be required to place themselves under British protection against their will." Of what avail would such an assurance be to the Elminas when the fort which dominated their commerce and territory was in other hands? The whole question of the transfer was then arousing great excitement through all the Gold Coast. A large portion of the inhabitants of the British Protectorate were opposed to a peace with the Ashantees, and that opposition was not likely to contribute to a peaceful union of friend and foe under British control.

Extraordi-
nary action of
Administrator
Salmon.

This enmity led to a most extraordinary step being taken by Mr. Salmon, the British Administrator. In March, 1872, in direct violation of

the treaty of 1831, which stipulated that "the paths shall be perfectly open, and free to all persons engaged in lawful traffic," he closed the roads through the British Protectorate against the Ashantees, on the ground that he feared their traders might be molested, and hostilities by the Ashantees might result. To them, doubtless, this step appeared to be a stratagem of war, and their old friendly road through Elmina would assume all the greater importance, and be regarded as all the more vital to their interests.

Such was the position of affairs when, in April, 1872, Governor Henessey arrived from Sierra Leone to take over the forts. In January, but two or three months before, the King of Elmina had protested to the Netherlands Government against the transfer. The Ashantees, with the roads to the coast closed against them, and with information that the £80 annually would no longer be paid to them as tribute—the *prestige* of tribute being, doubtless, far more valuable than the mere money—but that double the sum would be paid them to promote friendly relations of trade, must have been full of dissatisfaction. And yet, by some hocus-pocus, the transfer was said to have been peaceably effected.

It should be stated that the King held in captivity at Coomassie some Europeans, a Frenchman, and two German missionaries, one of whom was married; and Governor Salmon promised, as one condition, that if the white captives were released the roads should be reopened.

Completion
of transfer.

Captives at
Coomassie.

Failure of
efforts to quell
dissatisfac-
tion.

Governor Henessey, upon the transfer being effected, at once reversed this arbitrary action, and opened the roads freely as before. But even his well-meant efforts to make or to persuade these Elminas and Ashantees to transfer their rights were in vain. It is reported by him that the Elmina tribes severally gave their consent, by their chiefs, to the transfer on the 6th April, 1872; but Col. Harley, who succeeded Governor Salmon, contradicts this; and on that and some other points between him and Governor Henessey there exists "a pretty little quarrel as it stands," which, from the despatches, does not appear to be settled yet. If any consent was given, it must have been of the most hollow and unreal character.

It is certain that in the same year the despatches speak of a "dislike to the British Governor existing amongst the inhabitants of the towns lately ceded by the Dutch," and "that there has been brooding, smothering discontent on the part of the Dutch portion of the district since the transfer," although the Colonial Government "has done everything to remove it." It is certain, also, that three weeks after effecting the transfer there was a serious riot at Elmina—the very place where these tribes were said to have given their consent. It is certain that disturbances near other of the Dutch forts occurred, notably at Secondee. It is certain that kings and chiefs of these districts were arrested, and that the King of Elmina, on refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the English Government, was also imprisoned, and carried captive to Sierra Leone. It is also certain, as

might have been expected, that the King of Ashantee had sent his army to invade the Protectorate in defence of his rights, though even at that time it does not appear that he intended to attack the English.

As far as possible, the British officials seem to have given as much grounds for the disaffection as they well could. The stipends promised to the chiefs in the transferred districts were delayed in payment, and, when offered after the outbreak, they were then naturally regarded as bribes, and were disdainfully refused. Colonel Harley, the governor, is reported to have made a speech at Elmina, saying he would not allow their native customs to be continued. And the King of Elmina refused to hoist the English flag, because he said he was not consulted before it was hoisted on the fort at the transfer.

Now, therefore, was the time to withdraw from assuming the government of these people against their will. Lord Kimberley had instructed that unless they were willing they were not to be transferred. If by diplomacy or blundering we had been deceived into thinking they were willing when they were not, the greater reason we should withdraw from the position immediately on discovering this mistake. Had that been done there would have been peace.

Time for
withdrawal
from Dutch
forts.

But such a course, it is urged, is unworthy of a great nation. To me it appears the chiefest evidence of a nation's greatness that it has the magnanimity, at all costs, to do that which is right. The interests of this country demanded

long ago our withdrawal from the Coast; and, in the words of one of our foremost writers, it is "simply atrocious to engage in a bloody war for the sole purpose of trying the last new shell, and of showing the negro race how long is the arm of British dominion." A blustering, low-lived man, once pushed against John Wesley and tried to throw him down, saying, "Sir, I never make way for a fool." "*I always do,*" replied Wesley, stepping aside, and calmly passing on. And if these Ashantees and their allies were so brutal and so ignorant, there was the greater reason that we should show them "a more excellent way." The more so as we were in the wrong, and it was actually to our interest to withdraw, for a committee of Parliament had long ago decided that the sooner we did so, the better would it be for ourselves.

Was the war
premeditated?

The Ashantees affirmed they had no desire for war. Sir Garnet Wolseley has stated that he believed "that the King of Ashantee had looked about for a cause of war, and he thought he had a justifiable one when the Dutch transferred Elmina to the English nation." This opinion has no justification, save that the Ashantees had been collecting arms and purchasing ammunition, which was more likely to have been done for purposes of self-defence, in case his right to Elmina was not maintained, and save that when Elmina was transferred, the Kings of Ashantee had taken the fetish oath that the transfer should not be respected. Sir Charles Adderley, whose experience as Colonial Secretary gives more weight to his opinion, says,

in a letter to the *Times*, that he does not think it was a long-brewing storm, and that "such a calculated occasion is no more characteristic of savages than it turned out to be real in itself." In support of this view comes a letter from the King, dated March, 1873, in which, whilst he again asserts that Elmina and its dependencies are his, and that restoring them will be the only way to appease him, he adds, "for I have no quarrel with any white men." And in further support of this view is the fact that he acceded to the reduced amount which the Basle Mission Society had offered for the release of the captives. Nor had he, up to this time, directed his hostilities against the English. After Atjiempon, the King's uncle, was released, he returned to Ashantee, and having again to return to the British Protectorate on his journey to and from his own country, he was attacked by some of the tribes through those districts he had to pass. Against these tribes only, and his old enemies, the Fantees, had his invasion been directed. But in April, 1873, an English officer, Lieutenant Hopkins, having been directed to watch the conflict, with the view of covering Cape Coast Castle, finding the Fantees would not fulfil their promise to attack, advanced to do so. This proceeding broke through the established rule which had been laid down in 1869, by Lord Granville, that the native wars were to be carried on by themselves, and that we were not to fight their battles. And, in March, 1873, Governor Harley reports that he is "fully impressed with the spirit of the instruc-

Outbreak of
hostilities.

First blow
struck by a
British officer,
contrary to
our regula-
tions.

tions which require that the British Government should in no case become a principal in repelling the attacks of the Ashantees upon the natives of the Protectorate." A month after, this attack by Lieutenant Hopkins was made, was sanctioned by this very Colonel Harley, and was actually approved by the Home Government. Thus, breaking through our own regulations, we added, injury to injury, and became parties to a conflict with which we ought never to have had any concern. To add still farther fuel to the flame, when the King, according to our agreement with him, was ready to send the captives to the Prah, if we met him there with the promised £1,000, the British authorities refused to let the money leave Cape Coast Castle as they had engaged, and thus broke faith with the King.

Breach of
agreement by
the British.

And so the war fairly broke out.

Commence-
ment of the
war, and in-
quiry as to its
justice.

Sir Garnet Wolseley said, at the Lord Mayor's banquet: "I do not believe we ever entered upon any little war in which we had right more upon our side than in the recent one. It was a war that was forced upon us. It was not one of our own making." And he made this remark though he had received in Africa a despatch from Lord Kimberley, dated last November, which said: "It seems probable that one of the main grounds of quarrel arises from the impediments interposed by the coast tribes to the free access and trade of the Ashantees with the coast." And Lord Kimberley also said in the same despatch: "There is reason to believe that the Ashantees

received some provocation from the tribes of the Protectorate."

When Sir Garnet and his staff sailed, last August, in the steamer "Ambriz," for Africa, his aide-de-camp, Captain Brackenbury, to enlighten his fellow-officers—who were going out to fight, not knowing whether the battle would be for the right or the wrong—read two papers to them during the voyage recounting his version of the origin of the dispute. I have carefully followed his account. So far as he had anything material to urge in defence, I have embodied it in the remarks you have heard, and I will now quote to you one passage from his work. He says: "I have heard often in England, and more than once on board this ship"—I am glad there were some on board that ship conscientious enough to think for themselves—"the expression that this is an unjust war. I ask you to say where is the injustice. Is it in our accepting the Dutch forts, with the full consent, as far as we knew, honestly and freely given, of the Kings of Elmina and Ashantee?"

You have now heard narrated the reasons for this war. You have heard how, after a most careful examination of the whole question, a Select Committee of the House of Commons decided, in 1865, that we ought not to extend our territory, and that we ought to withdraw from the Coast. You have heard how, despite that recommendation, our Government decided to bargain for the settlements heretofore controlled by the Dutch. You have heard how the Ashantees claimed and

Recapitulation of causes.

proved their claim to Elmina, and how both the Elminas and the Ashantees objected again and again to it being transferred. You have heard how it was of vital interest to the Ashantees that this friendly route to the coast should be kept within their own control. You have heard how instructions were given not to accept the transfer unless the people were peaceful and willing; how a hollow peace and a forced consent was wrung from them by compulsion and intrigue; that no inquiry was made for the verification of that unreal consent, and that it was speedily repudiated. You have heard that when its unreality was discovered, and the natural tumults which might have been expected arose, there was no step taken by us to withdraw from the false position we had taken up. You have also heard how we stopped the Ashantees trading to the coast, how we broke faith with them in not sending the ransom to the Prah as promised, and how, contrary to our own regulations, our own officer struck the first blow. I say, you have heard these things, and, in the words of Sir Garnet Wolseley, I ask you, was this war forced upon us, or a war we forced upon the Ashantee King? Reversing the language of Captain Brackenbury, I ask you again, was not this a flagrantly unjust war? Has not the injustice been abundantly proved? And will not the transaction leave a stain upon the escutcheon of our national honour?

The campaign.

The campaign, as we know, was brief, and my allusion to its history shall be of the same character.

There was the usual slaughter when opportunity afforded, and when the scared blacks hid themselves in the bush, and there were no human targets for the Gatling artillery, the unoffending houses and the deserted towns afforded very good shell-practice for the guns. Of one town, Chamah, we read that "the 'Rattlesnake' was cleared for action, and in less than two hours time it was a heap of burning ruins." And two or three days after, two war-vessels approached and shelled it again, no other towns being at hand perhaps. This time, they set it on fire, so as to complete its destruction. Elmina, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, was burnt down; Axim, another town, was also burnt. At Abakrampa and at Amoaful there was more slaughter—how much, who can tell? for they fought in a thick bush, and, says the *Standard's* correspondent of that one battle, "there are places in the field where their dead lie very thickly together, often in groups of five or six. Numbers of wounded, too, can only have crawled away to die. Judging from the number seen in the bush, and by the fact that upwards of fifty bodies were found immediately in and around the town, the Ashantees must have lost altogether 1,000 men, and these of their best and bravest." At the Adansi hills and beyond, thence to the Ashantee capital, there was more fighting, and there again came—

"The death-shot hissing from afar,
The shock, the shout, the groan of war."

Eventually Coomassie was reached, and was duly

Results of
the war.

burnt, as a lurid testimony to the mercy and the chivalry of these soldiers from a Christian land.

The battle was fought! The victory won!
Doubtless, with cheers they made the welkin ring.
Yet, amid the jubilant cries the intrusive and
unwelcome inquiry cannot be stifled—

“But what good came of it at last?”

Quoth little Peterkin.

“Why that I cannot tell,” said he,

“But ’twas a famous victory.”

There had been the usual results, as at the battle
of Blenheim, and at most other battles—

“With fire and sword the country round

Was wasted far and wide,

And many a childing mother then

And new-born baby died ;

But things like that, you know, must be

At every famous victory.

“They say it was a shocking sight

After the field was won ;

For many thousand bodies here

Lay rotting in the sun ;

But things like that, you know, must be

At every famous victory.”

And Sir Garnet having got to Coomassie, having
won his famous victory, like Napoleon from Mos-
cow, could but march back again. To quote again
from Southey :—

“To get there had cost him much ado,

And then no better course he knew,

While the fields were green, and the sky was blue,

Marbleu ! Marbleu !

But to march back again from ” *Shantee.

* The meaning of the word “Fantee” is derived from the native term for herb-eaters, and the word “Shantee” is, in like manner, a compound from the native language, signifying, eaters of grain. The prefix “A,” converting the word to Ashantee, has been added by strangers.

It is true he brought with him spoils in golden treasure that have sold for £9,000, but to get that small amount has cost us nearly a million pounds. It is true that we are promised that a road 70 feet wide shall be cut from Coomassie to the Prah, but the highway rate for making that road will be one of the highest way rates this country has ever paid. It is true we have compelled the Ashantees to give up Elmina, though we formerly thought there was something wrong when the Germans similarly possessed themselves of Alsace and Lorraine. It is true that, whilst we have slaughtered the Ashantees where we could, to show our superior morality, we have desired King Koffee Kallalli henceforth to check human sacrifices, when he can. It is to be hoped he will be able to reconcile the little inconsistency that may appear to him between the precepts in our treaties and the practice in our battle-fields.

All this is true, but it does not quite complete the catalogue of results. False ideas of war and of glory have been once more stimulated and fostered.

Before the war, the press all but universally spoke adversely of the campaign as one originating in impolicy, if not injustice, and as one in which neither honour nor glory was to be gained. The Conservatives thought it a scandal to destroy so great a military power as that of Ashantee; the Radicals, being responsible for the campaign, deplored it, but with "bated breath and whispering humbleness." Had defeat attended our efforts, there would have been a loud outcry for inquiry,

Treaty results.

Other results.

False ideas of war.

and blame would have been freely cast upon all concerned. But success has blinded the vision, or chained the tongues of the leaders of public opinion, and thus tacitly they admit that war, to be right, needs only success.

The *Spectator* was a notable exception to this condemnation of the war, and the bloodthirstiness of its articles could not have been exceeded in eagerness and brutality by an Ashantee chief. Like a sleuth-hound scenting blood from afar, before the expedition could have landed, the writer goaded on his readers to overthrow the Ashantee power. With a ferocious howl, that could not have been excelled in atrocity by the savages and the "grand customs" of King Koffee, he broke out prophetically into Latin interjections of "*Delenda est Ashanteea*," and demanded that England should "smash up Coomassie" long before its fall. This fighting, from the *Spectator's* point of view, was to destroy a cruel and sanguinary power, but only in its place, as Sir Charles Adderley wrote long ago, "to uphold effete and powerless races against their inevitable destiny; to protect, for instance, feeble and disorganised Fantees against more enterprising and warlike Ashantees; and even encourage weakness to be insolent, and tax this country millions to fight out their resulting quarrels." Truly, he wrote like a prophet!

Expected
future wars.

As another result, therefore, we may expect a long series of future disputes and costly fights.

The conflict was also in some mysterious way to

spread the blessings of civilisation, and commerce, and Christianity. With a tooth-brush and Testament in one hand, a Snider rifle in the other, and a Gatling gun in front, the war was to prove a very cornucopia of blessing to the sons of Ham. Is the age of Crusades never to pass away? Has it not been proved to-night that trade flourishes better without than with the aid of military force? And though Islamism was propagated by the sword, it has yet to be demonstrated that the lessons of the Prince of Peace can ever be implanted by war.

Another result of the conflict was the kindling of a war-spirit which is easier aroused than quelled; and when aroused it does not stick at trifles. Mercenaries, who were not British subjects, who had not the most remote interest in the quarrel, were induced, for pay, to carry on the fight. The Houssas, of whom we have heard so much, were of this character. They were Moslems, dwellers in distant parts of the coast, were paid to become soldiers, and to slay human beings who had never done them the slightest wrong. Thus, to the discredit of this country, bravos were hired to murder, under the legal name of war, the people whom we had wronged. And our own soldiers, though they must have been ignorant whether we were in the right or the wrong, were so desirous of taking part in the slaughter, that the soldiers of one regiment, in its haste to get to the front, offered to go on half rations, as well as to carry stores with their own kits. In ordinary life, a man

Kindling of
war-spirit.

Employment
of mercenaries,
not British sub-
jects, to fight.

who volunteers to be an executioner is a being to be shunned.

The single murderer we devoutly hate,
But thousands slain, and realms made desolate,
Then him who murders most we hail,
And call him great.

National
welcome and
home-sorrow
contrasted.

In war, the man who, careless of right or wrong, actuated only by a vain desire for glory, volunteers for the front that he may assist in the slaughter, is a hero, and is fêted and caressed. The nation awaits him with open arms, and receives him with shouts of welcome. The acclamations of the multitude, the eulogies of the press, the favours and special regard of Royalty, the laudations of Prime Ministers who describe his deeds as thrilling the hearts of households, and sustaining and strengthening the core of the nation, all have contributed to fire the minds of our youth with the idea that this indeed must be fame worthy to win, and these, of a truth, great deeds to emulate. Meanwhile, unmarked of the rising crowd, there are sorrowing and weeping in many a desolated home, both of white and of black. Away yonder, in the African jungle, lie the ashes of many a man, the purpose of his being unfulfilled, his life wasted and thrown away. Killed! and killed so fatuously and so uselessly. But the tears must flow on. The sorrow of that grief-stricken heart can never be healed by the lost one's return. The green mound of an African grave will hold his body henceforth until the resurrection. But a common soldier, perhaps! A hired man, to shoot, and be shot at!

Yet for all that,

“ He was somebody’s love ;
 Somebody’s heart enshrined him there ;
 Somebody wafted his name above,
 Night and morn, on the wings of prayer.
 Somebody wept when he marched away,
 Looking so handsome, brave, and grand ;
 Somebody’s kiss on his forehead lay ;
 Somebody clung to his parting hand ;

Somebody watched and waited for him,
 Yearning to hold him again to her heart.
 There he lies—with the blue eyes dim,
 And smiling, child-like lips apart.
 Tenderly bury the fair young dead,
 Pausing to drop on his grave a tear ;
 Carve on the wooden slab at his head,—
 ‘ Somebody’s darling lies buried here.’ ”

There remains but one more duty—to point out ^{A result that might have been.} a result that might have been. Frequent objection is taken to the substitution of arbitration for war, ^{Arbitration} by urging the impossibility of its application to savage nations, and fortunately the history of this contest furnishes an answer that more than once might have been practically given to this question.

In 1871, the Ashantee King wrote, “ I let you know by this messenger, I wish really peace.” In 1872, when the dissatisfaction after the transfer of the forts was manifested, and again later in the same year when dispatches were sent from our Governor to King Koffee, opportunities were afforded for arbitration.

And there was reasonable probability that, had it then been proposed, the war would never have taken place. Governor Henessey describes one

arrangement he made with the Ashantees as "the very friendly interview I had last year with Cotico, the highly intelligent and dignified envoy of the King of Ashantee, in which the promises he made about opening the roads, and allowing the Ashantee traders to come down to the coast, were scrupulously kept." At the end of 1872 one of our native messengers, Mr. Dawson, writes from Coomassie : "I also begged to be intermedial to bring about peace and get him (the King) redressed, if necessary. . . . He appeared to have listened to me with interest, but said, 'Why were you not sent before? I am going; ready now.'" That is, his expedition had been prepared, and it was then too late. It was evident, therefore, that had proper measures been taken, a peaceful solution of the difficulty might have been found. There is all the more reason for this belief, because two successful cases of previous arbitration and arrest of war with the Ashantees are on record, and the intermediaries who conducted the negotiations would have given their services again. One of these was Prince Ansah, a member of the royal family of Ashantee, and who was a pensioner of Great Britain, where he had been educated. In 1863, when the Ashantees invaded the British Protectorate, he had been employed by Governor Pine as our envoy, and the result was the withdrawal of the Ashantees to their own territory. Prince Ansah, in offering his services so late as August last, said, "I believe, with proper credentials, I could bring about a lasting peace now."

Previous arbitration with the Ashantees.

The other case was that of the Rev. George Chapman, a Wesleyan missionary, who wrote last September expressing his regret he had not been at Coomassie, or the war might have been averted. In proof of this he relates that when he was there in 1844 an Ashantee woman had been murdered by an Assin, one of the frontier hostile tribes. The King and people held one of their palavers, the spirit of revenge in hot blood was aroused, and preparation was made for war. But, at the missionary's request, they waited until he went to the coast, and informed the Governor, who punished the murderer. The Ashantees were satisfied, the war was averted, and the missionary on his return was welcomed as "the man who had made peace in the country."

I will but trespass upon your patience to give one instance more of the ease with which savage tribes may be made amenable to the principles of peace. It occurs in a work recently published on "Life in Eastern Africa," by the Rev. Charles New, of the Livingstone Search Expedition. For many years two tribes in the east of Africa had been at variance, burning down each other's villages, and murdering each other's people. One old man, a chief, whose son had been slain, refused to hear of peace, but was at last persuaded by Mr. New to yield, and the reconciliation was thus effected: "It having been arranged that the parties should meet upon a spot on the border between the two territories . . . we set out for the place. Presently the two peoples came in

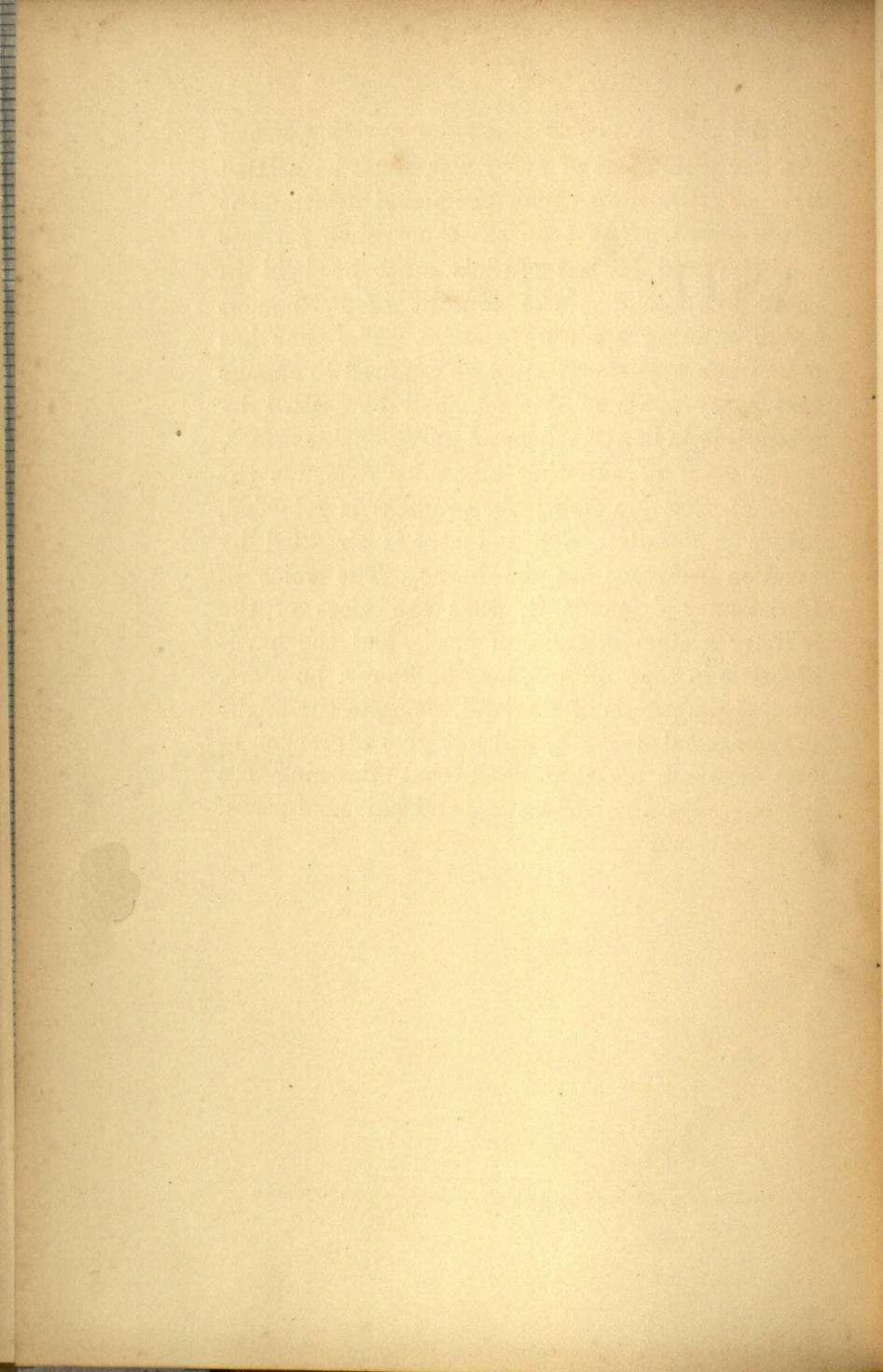
Arbitration
between sa-
vages of East
Africa, as re-
lated by the
Rev. Charles
New.

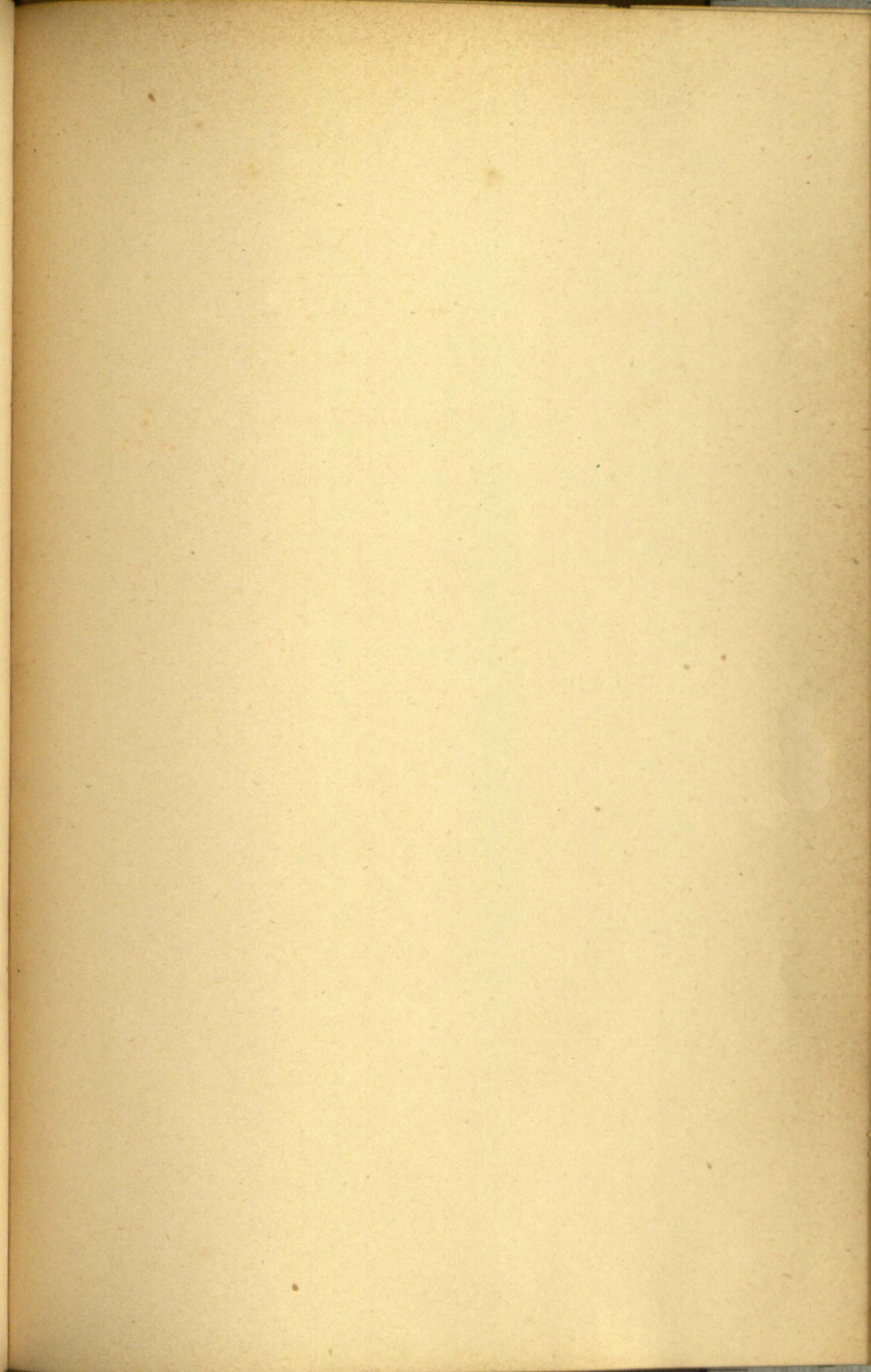
sight of each other, when, as if mutually smitten with fear, both suddenly halted. It was the first time they had met, except to shed each other's blood, for ten years. No wonder, then, that they should pause. Gradually approaching each other, they at length stood face to face, at a distance apart of only some twenty yards. Both sides were well armed; both were well prepared for war, if necessary. It was a critical moment; an injudicious word on either side might have led to blows, when, what a scene of carnage might have ensued! Both parties knelt upon the ground, grasping their arms more firmly, and looking at each other as if they knew not what to do. . . . Approaching the Warabai (one of the tribes), I (Mr. New) made a speech which broke the ice. Other speeches followed on both sides. Then two of the elders, one from each side, coming to the centre and shaking hands, the whole of the two parties sprang to their feet, rushed together, grasped each other's hands, called each other fathers and sons, friends and brothers, laughing and crying almost in a breath, and inviting each other home."

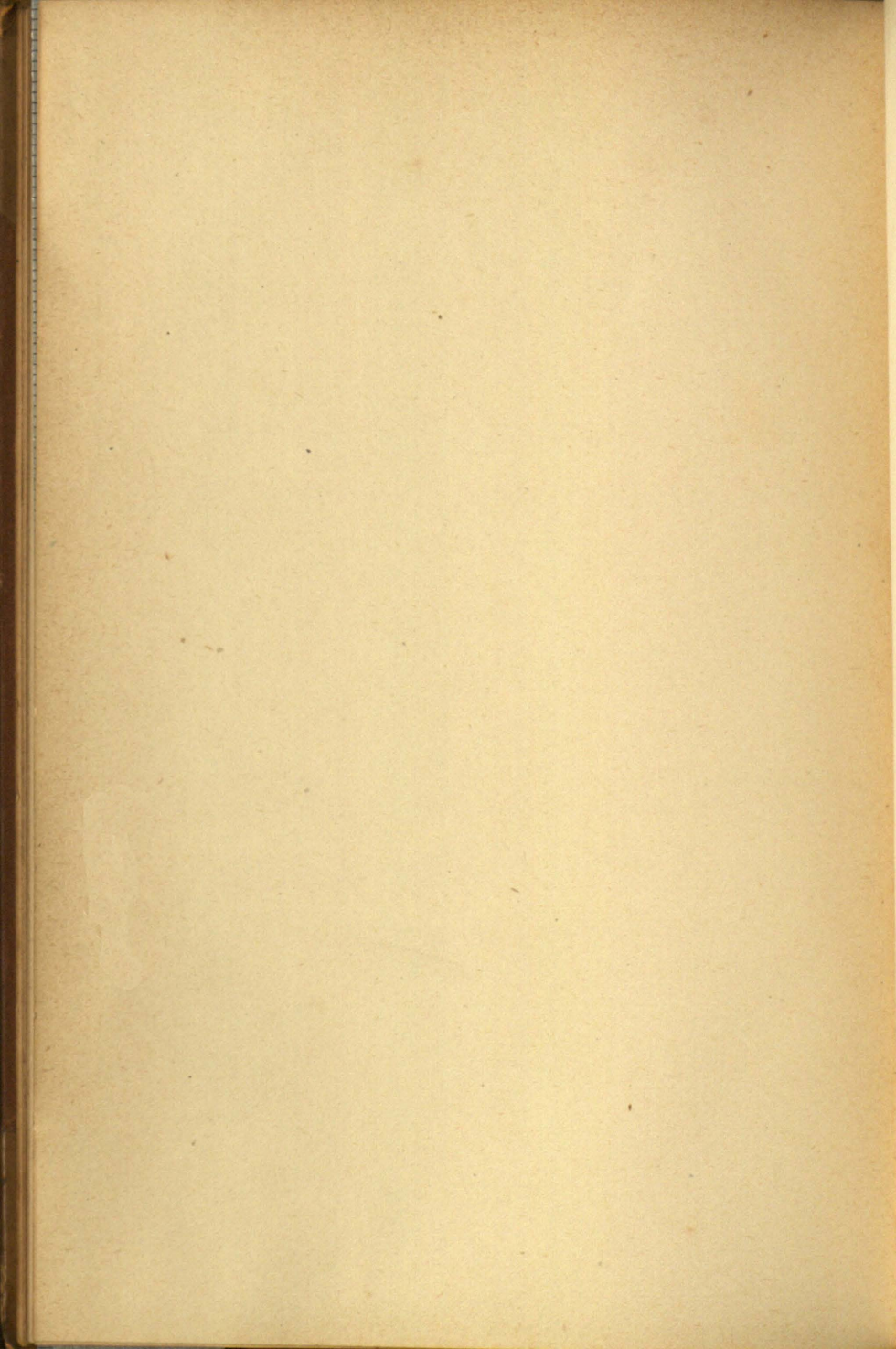
This war, then, which might have been avoided, and for which the thanks of both Houses of Parliament have been awarded, is open to the severest censure and condemnation. The mouths of our senators were stopped from criticism by the need of unanimity in according the votes of thanks.

But the time has come when the question, not of this war alone, but of every war, must be settled by some other means than the brutal arbitrament of the sword. The time has come when careless ministers and lawless officials must be held in check by obtaining the consent of Parliament before entering again upon strife. The time has come when Parliament must be required to engage that every cause of quarrel shall be settled by arbitration in lieu of other and unreasonable means.

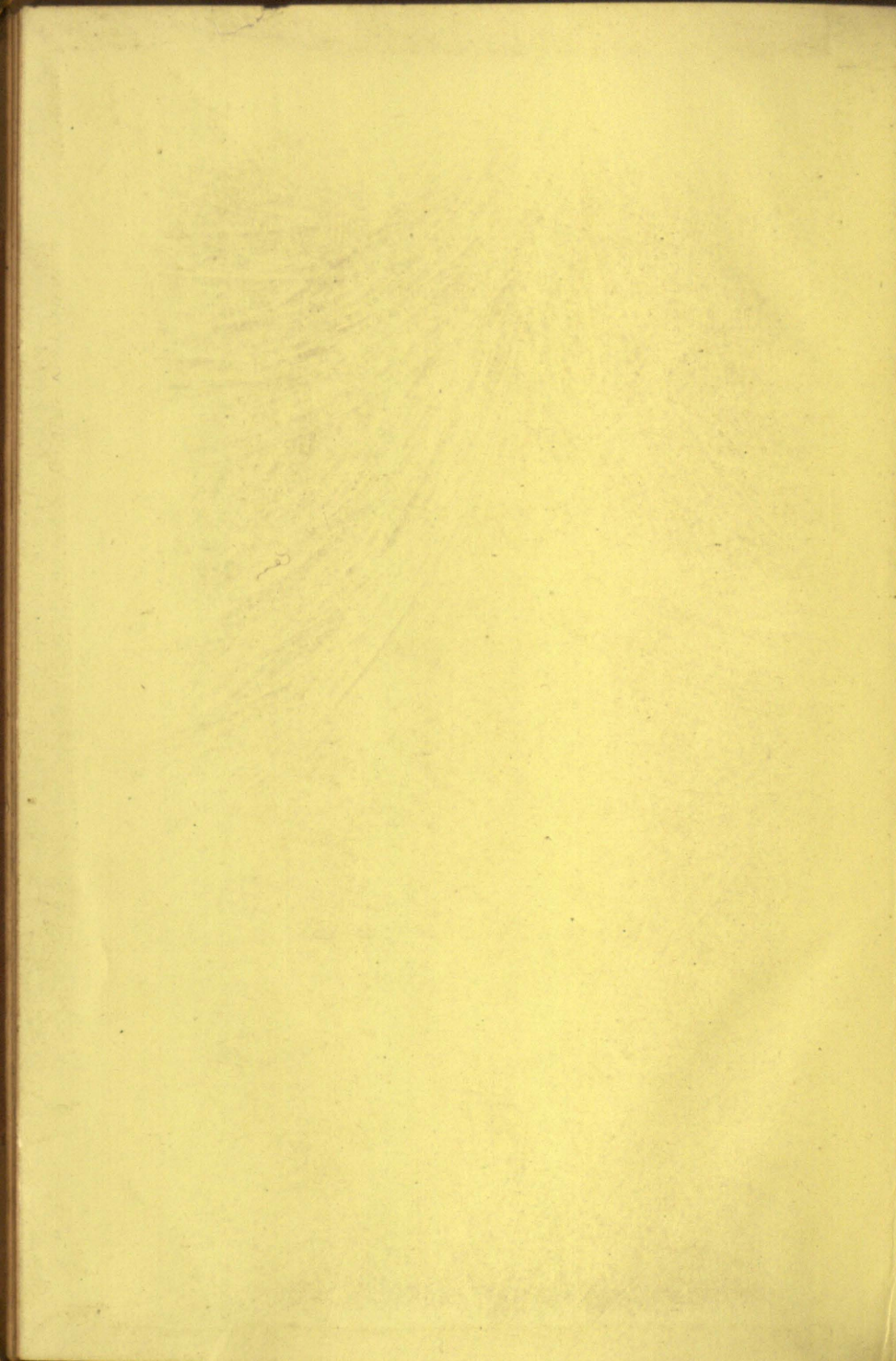
The voice of suffering humanity demands the dawn of that era now ; for progress is retarded, justice is defeated, and industry is shackled by taxation grievous to be borne. The voice of Christianity demands it, that the vices of the military system in times of peace, and the havoc of battle in time of war, may be known no more. And, if the people of England, rising in the might of their moral strength, will but give expression to that demand, speedily shall that dawning era brighten into a day of lasting and universal peace.







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RBR
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